

December 4, 2006

RE: Merle Brader v. Department of Corrections
Allocation Review Request 06AL0075

Dear Ms. Brader,

On September 20, 2006, I conducted a Director's review meeting at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of your position. Present at the Director's review meeting were you and Roy Murphy, Human Resources Manager, and Georgia Knowlen, Human Resources Consultant, both representing the Department of Corrections.

Background

You are assigned to the Office of Correctional Operations in the East Vancouver Field Office and report to John Kopf, Community Corrections Supervisor 1. On December 21, 2005, you submitted a request for a reallocation and desk audit to the Human Resources Unit of the Office of Correctional Operations in the Southwest Regional Office of the Department of Corrections (DOC). You requested that your Secretary Supervisor position, #CX20, be reallocated to the Office Manager classification. By letter dated February 22, 2006, Mr. Murphy issued an allocation determination indicating the Secretary Supervisor classification best described the majority of your duties listed on the Classification Questionnaire (CQ) (Exhibit B).

Subsequently, Mr. Murphy requested that a consultant from the Human Resources Programs Unit conduct a desk audit of position #CX20. On June 15, 2006, Ms. Knowlen performed a desk audit and interviewed both you and your supervisor, Mr. Kopf. Ms. Knowlen concluded that many of your duties could fall within the scope of either the Secretary Supervisor or Office Manager classifications; however, she also indicated the majority of your duties still appeared to be secretarial in nature. After reviewing Ms. Knowlen's audit report, he continued to believe your position was properly allocated to the Secretary Supervisor classification.

The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

Summary of Ms. Brader's Perspective

Ms. Brader asserts she performs Office Manager duties at least 51% of the time. Ms. Brader states that she works independently and contends her supervisor expects her to make decisions when issues concerning one of the buildings arise. Ms. Brader asserts she processes orders and vouchers independently, though she acknowledges her supervisor has final approval. Ms. Brader contends she determines the need for office supplies and equipment in accordance with contract guidelines. Ms. Brader further contends she makes arrangements for service and repair of equipment, tracks property management records, and acts as the information technology coordinator. Ms. Brader asserts that her supervisory duties have changed and that she spends less time supervising clerical and administrative support functions. Ms. Brader states she performs less of the secretarial duties like word processing and scheduling; rather, she asserts she performs more administrative work relating to the building and lease information. As a result, Ms. Brader contends her supervisor has delegated duties to her that fall in the Office Manager classification, which she believes is the correct classification for her position.

Summary of the Department of Corrections' (DOC's) Reasoning

DOC acknowledges that Ms. Brader does a tremendous amount of work and performs her duties well. DOC, however, believes the work she performs does not rise to the level of the Office Manager classification. DOC asserts that while Ms. Brader is involved in the duties associated with the building maintenance, she does not have the decision making authority representative of the Office Manager class. DOC agrees that Ms. Brader's responsibilities have increased but asserts she also maintained her Secretary Supervisor duties. DOC further agrees that Ms. Brader's supervisor has given her a lot of flexibility and relies on her expertise to perform the work. However, DOC contends that when weighing her assigned secretarial duties with the higher-level duties she has been delegated, the majority of her work time is spent performing secretarial/administrative support duties. Therefore, DOC believes the Secretary Supervisor classification accurately reflects the majority of Ms. Brader's duties.

While she may deal with building issues and process items, she still needs the final approval of her supervisor. While Ms. Brader's supervisor delegates a portion of his duties to her, he still retains the approval process and final decision making authority.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to December 22, 2005.

As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review meeting, and the verbal explanations provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and

responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Secretary Supervisor classification.

Rationale for Determination

In comparing your previous CQ from 2004 (Exhibit A) to the CQ submitted for this review (Exhibit B), several of the secretarial duties also appear in the newer CQ. For example, on the CQ dated December 22, 2005, you describe, in part, 28% of your duties as follows:

- Evaluate office procedures, equipment, and staffing needs;
- Develop new work methods and modifying existing work methods;
- Establish priorities for work;
- Schedule and conduct support staff meetings;
- Supervise support staff functions;
- Interview and recommend applicants;
- Use independent judgment to resolve problems.

All of the above functions are also listed on the previous CQ in the section denoting 51% of your work.

In addition, you state 25% of your work is devoted to maintaining the liaison and coordination between service and technical or professional units to include the following:

- Monitor and coordinate the operation of computer terminals;
- Resolve issues, determining level of IT assistance needed;
- Contact equipment manufactures/repair to service and maintain office equipment;
- Track and monitor property managements records;
- Prepare and process travel vouchers;
- Track leave usage and monitor leave balances;
- Make arrangements for maintenance, repair work or purchase/surplus of vehicles;
- Monitor quality of contracted janitorial service;
- Maintain liaison with local bus service representative for purchase of bus passes;
- Arrange for fire extinguisher inspections;
- Maintain a liaison with Consolidated Mail for coordination of mail services.

Again, many of these functions are identified on your previous CQ as well. All of the above functions, which account for 53% of your assigned work, reflect secretarial and administrative support duties and are consistent with the Secretary Supervisor classification. In addition, secretarial/support duties on page two of the CQ submitted for reallocation include staying knowledgeable of current office equipment, furniture and supply vendors, contract changes and updates (also stated in previous CQ); ordering janitorial and office supplies; preparing and processing monthly payment vouchers;

monitoring and maintaining credit card and bus usage logs; and preparing spreadsheets for budget reporting. Functions such as ordering supplies, processing vouchers, and monitoring and maintaining information logs are all indicative of a high-level secretarial position.

In your case, you report directly to the Community Corrections Supervisor in the East Vancouver office, which is consistent with the category concept for the Clerical, Office Support and Secretarial Occupational Category. For instance, the category concept states, “[p]ositions in this category provide a variety of . . . secretarial duties in support of a work unit, department, supervisor(s), staff members, and/or general day-to-day office operations.” Furthermore, the distinguishing characteristics at the Secretary Supervisor level include supervising office support staff; interviewing and recommending selection of applicants; establishing office procedures, standards, priorities, and deadlines; independently planning, organizing and prioritizing work; monitoring and evaluating items such as budgets; developing, modifying, and/or maintaining systems for tracking, such as a database; and coordinating office operations to ensure work goals are met.

During the Director's review meeting, you said the primary changes in your assignments revolved around your supervisor's delegation of duties. While both your previous CQ and the one submitted for reallocation primarily reflect secretarial duties, I recognize the percentages differ somewhat. Further, Ms. Knowlen's audit notes indicate that your supervisor is very confident in your performance, and “he can rely on [you] to handle just about anything” (Exhibit G). At the same time, the distinguishing characteristics for the Secretary Supervisor class include the coordination of administrative support functions and the use of independent judgment. They also note that “[w]ork is subject to review at the completion stage,” which is consistent with your supervisor's statements that he approves your work. The examples of work further note that the Secretary Supervisor “[r]epresents supervisor(s) as delegated.” Although you and your supervisor contend you perform the same duties as the Office Managers positions, there is no evidence your supervisor is involved in assigning the work to those incumbents. Moreover, an allocation of a position is not based on a comparison to other positions.

In your discussion with Ms. Knowlen you described a typical work day as follows: (Exhibits G & H)

- Prioritize work;
- No set schedule – do the high priority/emergent items first;
- Check to be sure we have adequate staff coverage;
- Resolve computer problems that are sent to you;
- Check to see if there are assignments from supervisor or other officers;
- Check on building problems – you are responsible for management for 8,347 square foot lease building.

With the exception of some building issues, which you indicated to Ms. Knowlen comprised about 10% of your daily tasks, all of the above duties fit the Secretary

Supervisor class. Additionally, the building related duties you described to Ms. Knowlen during the audit also include secretarial/administrative support functions like coordinating and scheduling building maintenance and making a list of items in need of repair, as well as preparing the purchase orders for vendors doing the repair work.

The definition for the Office Manager classification states the position “[p]lans, organizes, assigns, and supervises varied and extensive processing and service units and related central office activities.” I agree with Ms. Knowlen’s conclusion that you do perform some Office Manager tasks. For instance, the duties that include coordinating office design planning between the realtor and building owner/operations manager as well as the other building related tasks delegated to you by your supervisor (20%) and the arrangement of maintenance contracts and emergency repairs (1%) may also extend to the Office Manager.

In addition, you issue and inventory office entry keys, arrange for lock changes, and work with the building manager on parking lot issues, as delegated duties. You also make determinations regarding the need for office furniture equipment, which includes providing written justification within mandatory contract guidelines; however, Ms. Knowlen’s audit notes also indicate you handle the paperwork for those items but do not independently make decisions about which items to order. Similarly, your supervisor told Ms. Knowlen he has delegated the front end work to you, and you forward the information to him for final approval (Exhibits H & I).

It is evident you are an invaluable asset to the East Vancouver Office, and your supervisor obviously relies on you to assist him with the daily operations, as reflected in the audit notes. An allocation of a position, however, is based on the assigned duties and responsibilities to the position, and the category concept for the Secretary Supervisor class allows for the delegation of duties by a supervisor. Therefore, the majority of duties assigned to position #CX20 properly fits the Secretary Supervisor classification

Appeal Rights

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director’s review to the Personnel Resources Board (board) by filing written exceptions to the Director’s determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC.

WAC 357-52-015 states that an appeal must be received in writing at the office of the board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Director’s determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director’s determination becomes final.

Sincerely,

Teresa Parsons

Director's Review Supervisor

c: Roy Murphy, DOC
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits